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THE TOWN KNOWN AS SOULBRIDGE OCCUPIED A VERY SMALL SLICE OF UPPER NEW YORK STATE REAL ESTATE IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY... BUT CONTAINED MORE HATE THAN ITS TOWNSPEOPLE COULD HANDLE. AND, AS IS THE WAY WITH HATRED, IT OVERFLOWED INTO VIOLENCE: VIOLENCE HURLED TOWARD THE MYSTERIOUS TENANT OF BOLT MANOR.
INCIDENT at SOULBRIDGE
DEATH TO BOLT! THE TORCHES... PUT THE TORCHES TO THAT ACCURSED HOUSE!
THUS, THIS SCENE... A SCENE THAT IS DESTINED TO HIGHLIGHT THE MEMORIES OF FUTURE SOULBRIDGE RESIDENTS, DESTINED, ALSO, TO BURN THE MEMORY OF A CERTAIN BOLT TO-BE. CAN YOU HEAR THEIR VENGEFUL CRIES, DRIFTING THROUGH THE BLOOD-RED MISTS OF TIME? ELIAS BOLT HAS EARS TO HEAR AND HE HEARS...
AYE, RAYMOND! LET'S MAKE THIS A BLAZE THE DEVIL HIMSELF COULD BE PROUD OF!
SCRIPT: TOM TUNA
ART: REGREO
D7147

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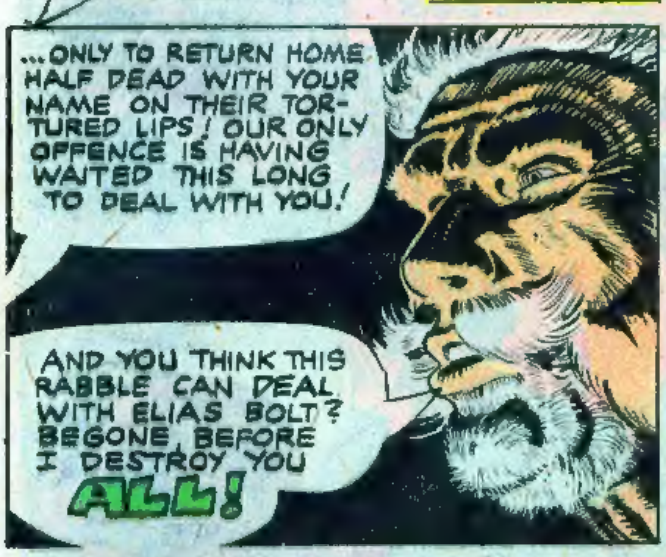
A MrBC Scan!

AND THEN... HE APPEARS...

SAVAGES! WHY DO YOU PERSECUTE ME SO? HAVE YOU SO LITTLE FORESIGHT THAT YOU CANNOT SEE THE PLANS... THE HISTORY IN WHICH YOU WILL BE INVOLVED?


WE WILL LISTEN TO NO MORE OF YOUR LIES, MADMAN!

...ONLY TO RETURN HOME HALF DEAD WITH YOUR NAME ON THEIR TORTURED LIPS! OUR ONLY OFFENCE IS HAVING WAITED THIS LONG TO DEAL WITH YOU!

AND YOU THINK THIS RABBLE CAN DEAL WITH ELIAS BOLT? BEGONE, BEFORE I DESTROY YOU ALL!

...FOREVER!

MADMAN? ARE YOU AWARE TO WHOM YOU SPEAK, SIR? DO YOU KNOW...

I KNOW ENOUGH, BOLT. I KNOW WHAT WE ALL KNOW, THAT FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS OUR FRIENDS HAVE DISAPPEARED...

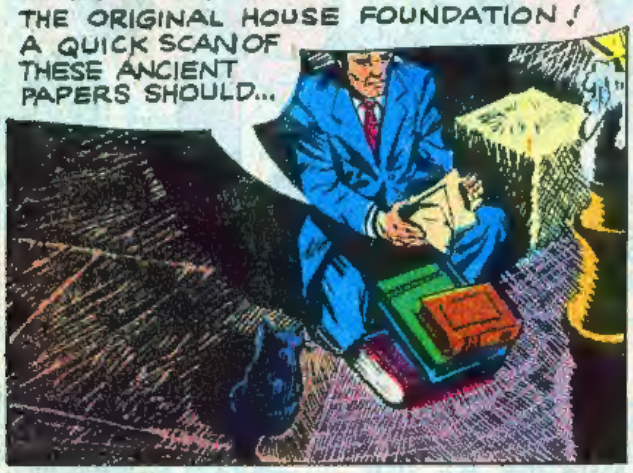
NAY, BOLT! WE INTEND TO PUT AN END TO YOUR MURDEROUS SCHEMES...

I'VE NEVER ENJOYED A FIRE BEFORE TONIGHT, BUT FRIEND, THAT IS BEAUTIFUL...

BUT THE DYING MANSION WOULD NOT STAY DEAD AND LIKE THE FABLED PHONIX IT WAS RESTORED FROM ITS ASHES BY ELIAS' GREAT-GRANDSON MALACHI...
...JUST BEAUTIFUL, SIR. YOU'VE RESTORED THE OLD MANSION PERFECTLY. YOU HAVE MY APPRECIATION.
I'D RATHER HAVE YOUR CHECK, MR. BOLT!
IT WILL BE IN THE MAIL TOMORROW, AND NOW, IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME, I THINK I'D LIKE TO BE ALONE.
UH, YEAH... SURE. STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHY YOU WANTED THAT OLD PLACE RE-BUILT, THOUGH.
PEOPLE SAY SOME NUT LIVED THERE ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, YA KNOW.
I KNOW. HE WAS MY GREAT GRAND-FATHER.
I SHOULD'A KNOWN!
AND WHEN THE BUILDERS WANDER INTO SOULBRIDGE'S MAIN STREET TO COOL DOWN A BURNING THIRST...
DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU GUYS JUST PUT THAT HELL HOUSE BACK TOGETHER?
MISTER, I'D BUILD POMPEI FOR THE RIGHT FEE!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, FELLA!
"...IF THAT HOUSE IS BACK WITH A BOLT, NO ONE IN SOULBRIDGE WILL SLEEP WELL TONIGHT."
...I'M FINALLY HOME. EVER SINCE I LEARNED OF MY GREAT GRAND-FATHER'S MURDER AT THE HANDS OF THESE PEOPLE DURING THE LAST CENTURY!
ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES
3

I COULDN'T WAIT TO MOVE INTO THIS CHARMING, LITTLE COMMUNITY. COULD I, EBON? YOU AND I ARE GOING TO MAKE THE 'BOLT' NAME MEMORABLE AROUND HERE AGAIN, AREN'T WE?

RUMORS OF FEAR LAY HEAVY ON NIGHT-SHROUDED SOULBRIDGE THAT NIGHT AND MANY MIDNIGHT-LIGHTS BURN WITH GOLDEN FIRE BUT, ONLY ONE LIGHT ILLUMES THIS KIND OF SCENE...


...AND HERE IT IS, EBON! I KNEW I COULD LOCATE ELIAS BOLT'S MOST SECRET MANUSCRIPTS IF I SEARCHED THE WALLS OF THE ORIGINAL HOUSE FOUNDATION! A QUICK SCAN OF THESE ANCIENT PAPERS SHOULD...

CAN IT BE? YES, MY ANCESTOR'S PRINCIPLES OF MIND TRANSFERAL. FORTUNATELY THESE LETTERS STAMPED HERE BLOT OUT NOTHING VITAL. HIS BIGGEST ERROR WAS IN NOT FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH HIS THEORIES...
M.P.P.

...AND PUTTING THEM INTO PRACTICE! IT'S REALLY QUITE SIMPLE, DEAR CAT! I HAVE MERELY TO STUDY MY GREAT GRAND-SIRE'S NOTES AND FORMULAS PUT YOU UNDER MILD HYPNOSIS...

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

THROUGHOUT THE LONG NIGHT AND MOST OF THE NEXT DAY, MALACHI BOLT **POURED** OVER THE MUSTY EVIL-FRAUGHT PARCHMENTS...

AND THEN...THE MAN **BECAME** THE CAT.

AS THE RITUAL WORE ON, THE **MAN** BECAME AS JUMPY AS THE **CAT.**

GLORIOUS! THE EXPERIMENT IS A SUCCESS! I CAN SEE EVERYTHING FROM EBON'S OWN EYES...BUT HAS THE TRANSFER BEEN COMPLETED? MY BODY...

PERFECT! EBON'S MIND WILL KEEP MY HUMAN BODY SAFE FROM HARM UNTIL I RETURN.

WHAT A **MASTER** STROKE! STRIKING BACK AT THESE **MURDEROUS** FOOLS IN THE FORM OF ONE OF NATURE'S MOST GRACEFUL, MOST AGILE FIGHTING MACHINES! AND NOW...

HERE'S WHERE THE CREATURES OF SOULBRIDGE START TO RUE THE **BLOOD** ON THEIR ANCESTOR'S HANDS!

THAT **SOUND!**

SHARP, UNSHEATHED CLAWS, GUIDED BY A MANIACAL MIND, FIND LITTLE RESISTANCE IN THE STARTLED VILLAGER.

...UNAWARE THAT ITS EYES HAVE NOT BEEN AS KEEN AS ITS DAGGERED FOREPAWS.

SATISFIED WITH ITS KILL, THE CAT SCANS THE AREA AND TURNS TO LEAVE...

"...TOWARDS BOLT MANOR."

OF COURSE THERE'S NO ANSWER! I'M BOLT, YOU CRETINS! WHAT SWEET IRONY! I'LL BE FREE TO TRANSFER MY MIND TO HORSES, BULLS... I'LL KILL HUNDREDS AND NEVER BE BLAMED.

BUT AS THE ESSENCE OF MALACHI BOLT ATTEMPTS TO RETURN TO HIS MORTAL SHELL...

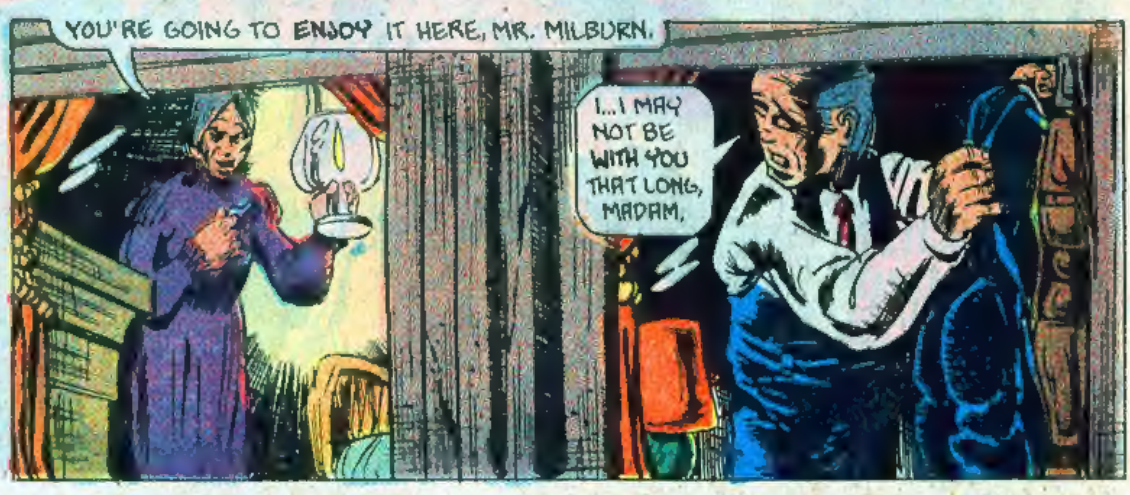
I...I'VE KILLED MYSELF! THOSE INITIALS ON THE OLD DOCUMENTS... N.R.P.! ELIAS BOLT NEVER TRIED THE MIND SWITCHING!
LET'S GO, MEN! TIME TO TAKE CARE OF THE CAT.

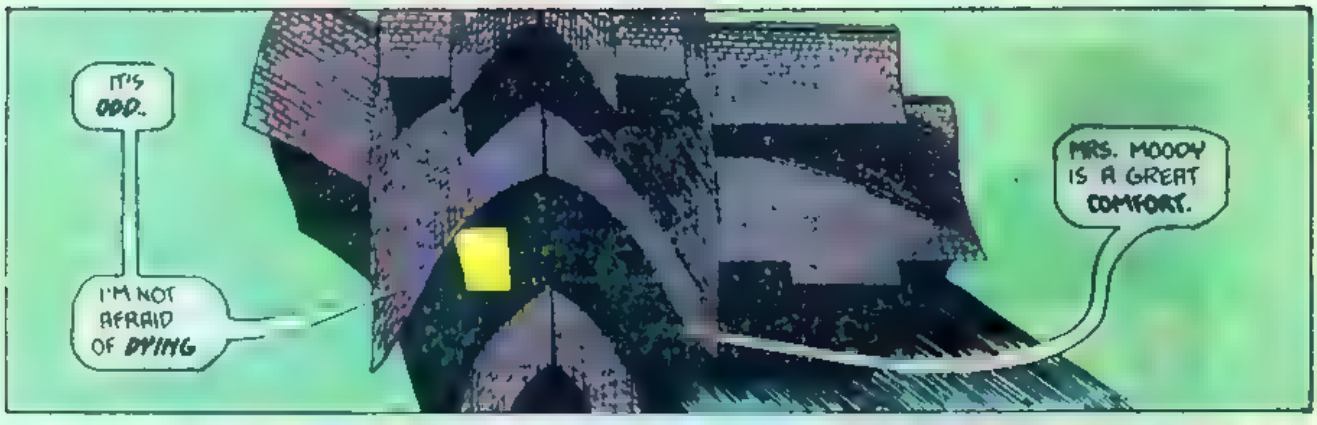
THAT NIGHT IN A TOWN CALLED SOULBRIDGE, A GROUP OF MEN KILLED A CAT... AND PERHAPS MORE THAN A CAT.

THE END

LOOK AT POOR LEO MILBURN... A DYING MAN, WITHOUT HOPE...OPERATED ON UNSUCCESSFULLY, PENNILESS NOW AFTER YEARS OF HOSPITALIZATION AND DOCTORING... FRIENDLESS IN A HOSTILE WORLD! WITH THE FEW DOLLARS HE HAD, AND IN THE BRIEF TIME LEFT TO HIM, LEO WANTED TO FIND PEACE. SO HE STAGGERED OUT OF THE HOSPITAL AND CAME HERE TO A PLACE YOU'D PROBABLY CALL DULLSVILLE... TO A RAMSHACKLE OLD HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN...
A QUIET PLACE TO DIE!
IT'S NO SKIN OFF MY NOSE, OLD MAN, BUT NOBODY EVER STAYS IN THE MOODY HOUSE!
I DOUBT IF ANYONE'S ALIVE IN THERE!
I HAVE NO CHOICE, IT'S ALL I CAN AFFORD.
GUESTS WELCOME
THEY SAY IT'S HAUNTED... BUT WHAT DO I HAVE TO FEAR?
I...UH... COFF... UNDERSTAND YOU WELCOME GUESTS, MRS. MOODY?
NOT EVERYONE, SIR... BUT PLEASE COME IN OUT OF THE NIGHT AIR.

AFTER TEA (NONE OF THE OTHER GUESTS JOINED THEM), MRS. MOODY TOOK LEO MILBURN TO HIS ROOM. IT WAS OLD-FASHIONED, BUT COMFORTABLE...

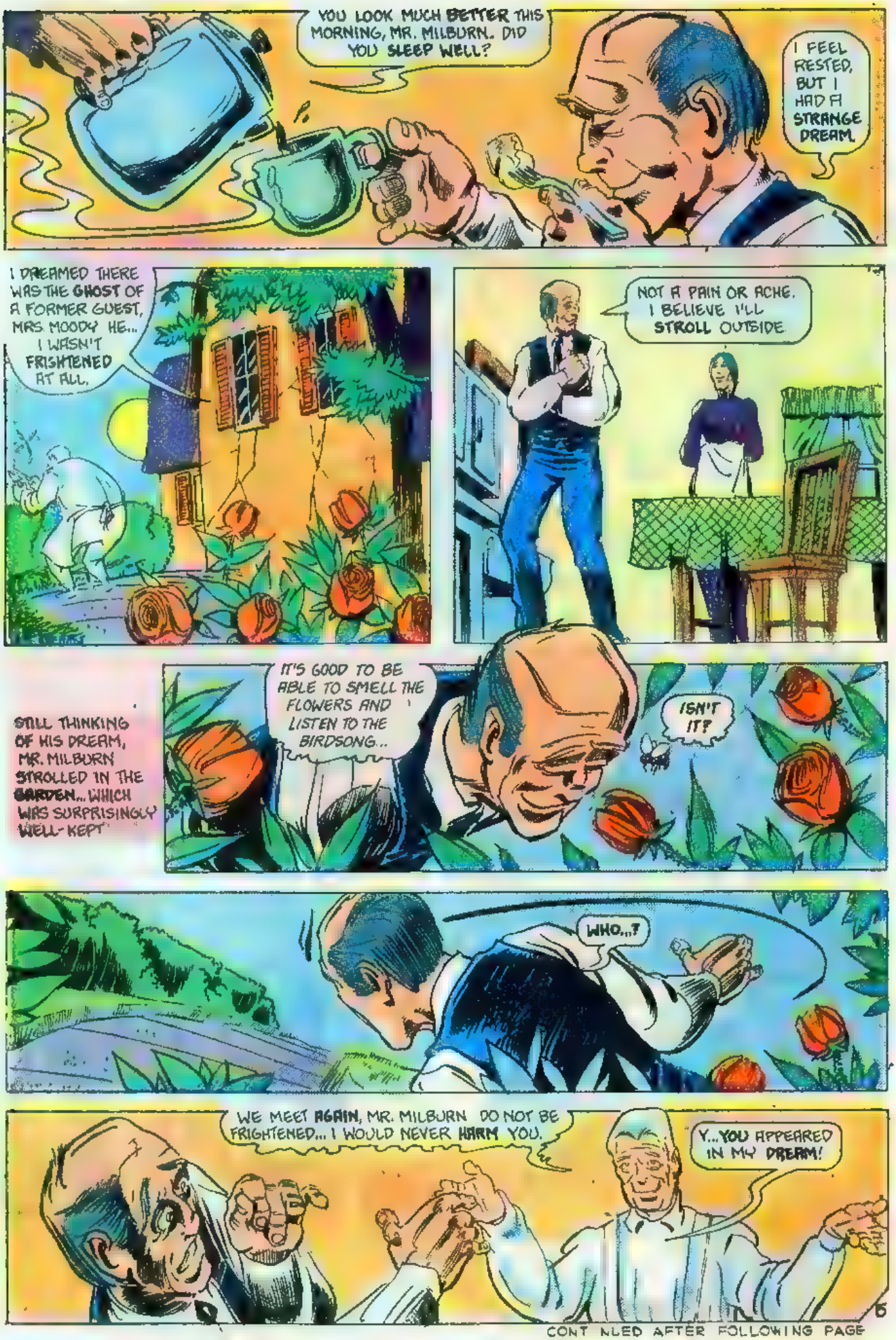




HE AWAKENED IN THE EARLY HOURS ..WITH THAT TERRIBLE PAIN IN HIS CHEST...THE ONE HE KNEW WOULD PRESAGE DEATH SOMEDAY...

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

YOU'RE... DO YOU LIVE HERE?
IN A SENSE, MR. MILBURN. IN FACT, THIS WAS MY ROOM.
DO NOT BE AFRAID OF DEATH, MR. MILBURN
DEATH IS NOT THE END, MR. MILBURN... IT IS A BEGINNING
MR. MILBURN HEARD VOICES IN THE MORNING. LAUGHTER SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE. HE WAS WITHOUT PAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN WEEKS.
MR. MILBURN YOU LOOK RESTED I HOPE WE DIDN'T AWAKEN YOU
NOT AT ALL, MRS. MOODY. AM I TOO EARLY FOR BREAKFAST?
I'LL WAIT FOR THE OTHERS, MRS. MOODY.
THEY WON'T BE EATING, MR. MILBURN. YOU GO RIGHT AHEAD...WHILE THE FOOD IS WARM.


YOU LOOK MUCH BETTER THIS MORNING, MR. MILBURN. DID YOU SLEEP WELL?
I FEEL RESTED, BUT I HAD A STRANGE DREAM.
I DREAMED THERE WAS THE GHOST OF A FORMER GUEST, MRS. MOODY HE... I WASN'T FRIGHTENED AT ALL.
NOT A PAIN OR ACHE. I BELIEVE I'LL STROLL OUTSIDE.
STILL THINKING OF HIS DREAM, MR. MILBURN STROLLED IN THE GARDEN... WHICH WAS SURPRISINGLY WELL-KEPT
IT'S GOOD TO BE ABLE TO SMELL THE FLOWERS AND LISTEN TO THE BIRDSONG...
ISN'T IT?
WHO...?
WE MEET AGAIN, MR. MILBURN. DO NOT BE FRIGHTENED... I WOULD NEVER HARM YOU.
Y...YOU APPEARED IN MY DREAM!

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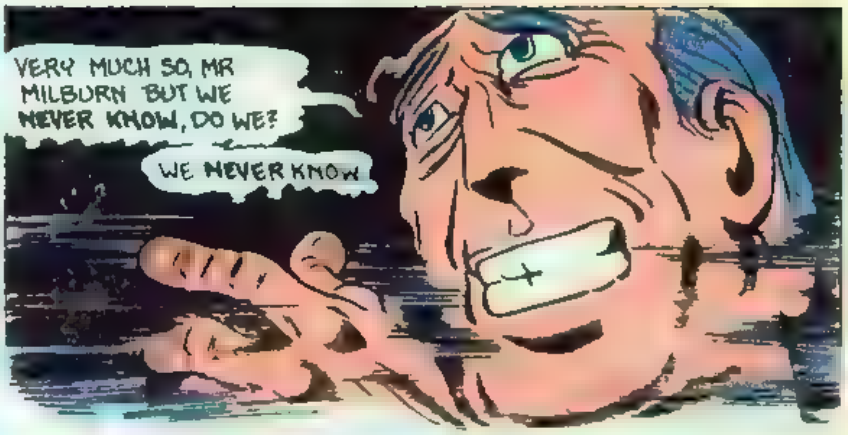


NEVER HAD THE AIR SMELLED SWEETER... MR MILBURN STRODE WITH FIRM STEP AND CLEAR EYE TOWARD THE VILLAGE

THAT'S ODD. MY CHEST. AN ODD FEELING.
I FEEL FINE NOW. MY IMAGINATION I GUESS.
HMM. I'M HUNGRY. I'LL GO BACK AND SEE WHAT WE HAVE FOR LUNCH.
YOU WALKED TO TOWN? SPLENDID, MR MILBURN
LOVELY PLACE. I FEEL ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL.
I SEE YOU TWO HAVE MET
I'M SO GLAD YOU LIKE IT HERE, MR. MILBURN.
MEANWHILE, IN THE VILLAGE...
YOU CAN TAKE YOUR TIME, GENTLEMEN
THIS MAN IS DEAD.
OH. DO
IT'S A LOVELY PLACE, MRS MOODY
A MASSIVE HEART ATTACK. IT HAPPENED INSTANTLY
THE END!

ALL IN THE MIND of Lucille Michaud

BEING A MORTICIAN HAS ITS ADVANTAGES. ONE OF THEM, OF COURSE, IS MY CLIENTS RARELY COME BACK TO COMPLAIN (I'LL HAVE TO TELL YOU ABOUT AN EXCEPTION TO THAT ONE OF THESE DAYS) AND IT'S USUALLY QUIET AS THE GRAVE AROUND HERE. HOWEVER I OFTEN HEAR INTERESTING LITTLE STORIES...NOT USUALLY FROM THE SUBJECTS, OF COURSE... BUT IN DIARIES OR LETTERS I FIND AMONG THEIR THINGS. FOR INSTANCE....I WAS CURIOUS ABOUT A LADY WHOSE LAST REMAINS CAME INTO MY CARE. SO CURIOUSLY MARKED THAT I WONDERED HOW IT HAPPENED....AND LEARNED THE STARTLING STORY OF LUCILLE MICHAUD.

SCRIPT: JOE GILL

ART: STEVE DITKO

D-7211

OBEY ME, LUCILLE, AND YOU WILL COME TO NO HARM! LOOK INTO THE CRYSTAL BALL. WHAT DO YOU SEE?

I SEE MANY THINGS, AUNT ANNA. THERE IS SOMETHING *ALIVE* TRYING TO ESCAPE... IT IS IN THE SMOKE... *ABOVE YOUR HEAD!*

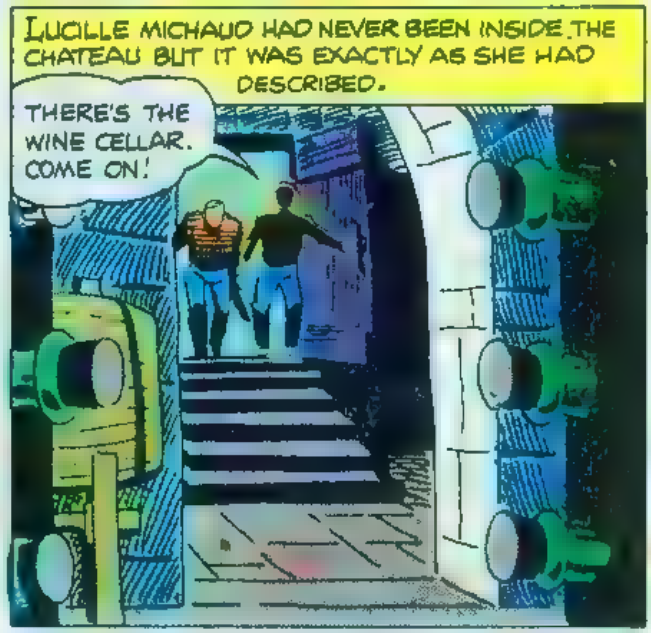
LUCILLE, YOUR MIND IS BLANK. THINK NOW OF LE COMTE'S CHATEAU. HE HAS MUCH GOLD. TELL ME WHERE IT IS.

LE COMTE KEEPS HIS GOLD IN A SECRET CHAMBER BENEATH THE FLOOR IN HIS WINE CELLAR, AUNT ANNA. A TABLE STANDS ABOVE THIS OPENING.

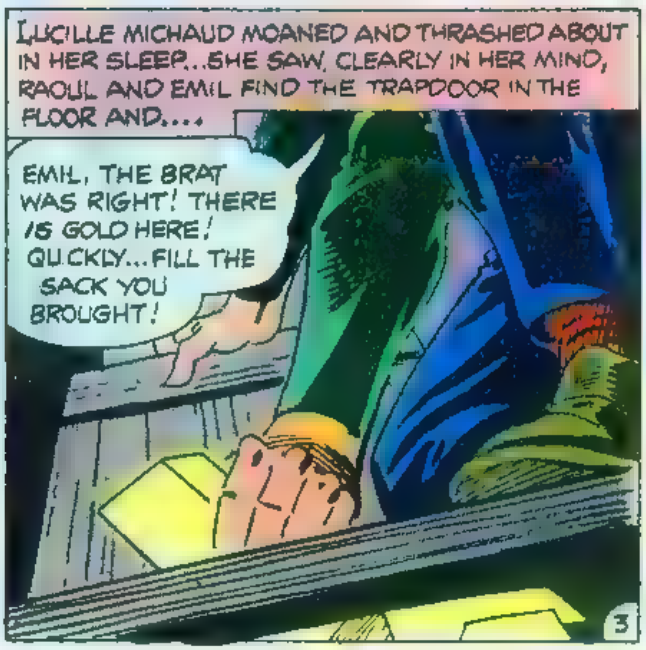
I...I'M SORRY, AUNT ANNA, I'M SLEEPY, I SUPPOSE.
YOU'RE TIRED, DEAR. IT IS LATE FOR A FIFTEEN YEAR OLD SCHOOLGIRL TO BE AWAKE. GO TO YOUR ROOM.
WELL, ANNA? WERE YOU RIGHT? DID THE STUPID GIRL KNOW ANYTHING?
LUCILLE IS INNOCENT, RAOUL...BUT NEVER STUPID!
LISTEN CLOSELY, RAOUL. LE COMTE HAS A SECRET CACHE IN THE WINE CELLAR BENEATH THE FLOOR. A TABLE STANDS UPON THE SPOT!
WE WILL CALL UPON LE COMTE TONIGHT, ANNA.
YES, MME. MICHAUD'S COMPANIONS WERE THIEVES. THAT NIGHT, THEY WAITED UNTIL THE SMALL CHURCH IN THE VILLAGE TOLLED MIDNIGHT AND THEN...
LE COMTE HAS DOGS, RAOUL. WHEN THEY COME, I WILL DEAL WITH THEM.
QUICKLY, EMI.... THEY ARE TRAINED TO KILL!
GRRRR...
GRRRR
THERE IS ENOUGH STRYCHNINE IN THE MEAT TO KILL A BULL! THEY WILL BE DEAD IN A MOMENT!

WHILE THIS OCCURRED, SCHOOLGIRL LUCILLE MICHAUD WAS SLEEPING. SHE DREAMED....AND IT QUICKLY BECAME A *NIGHTMARE!*

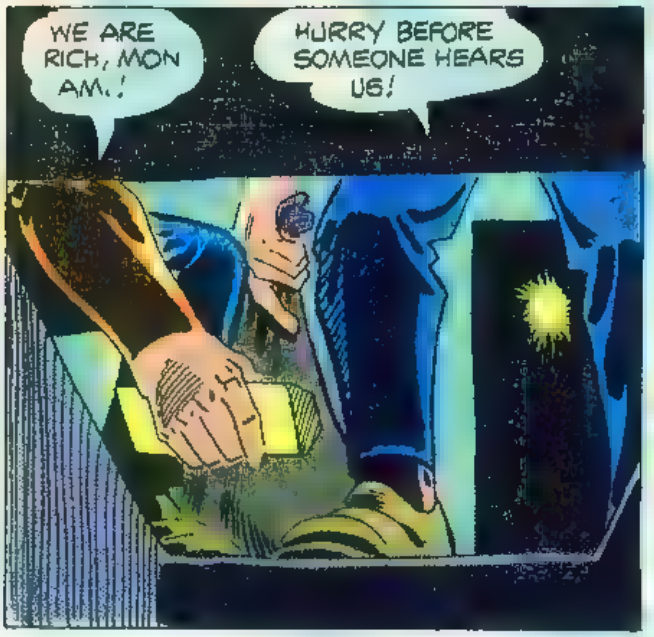
LUCILLE MICHAUD HAD NEVER BEEN INSIDE THE CHATEAU BUT IT WAS EXACTLY AS SHE HAD DESCRIBED.



LUCILLE MICHAUD MOANED AND THRASHED ABOUT IN HER SLEEP...SHE SAW, CLEARLY IN HER MIND, RAOUL AND EMIL FIND THE TRAPDOOR IN THE FLOOR AND....

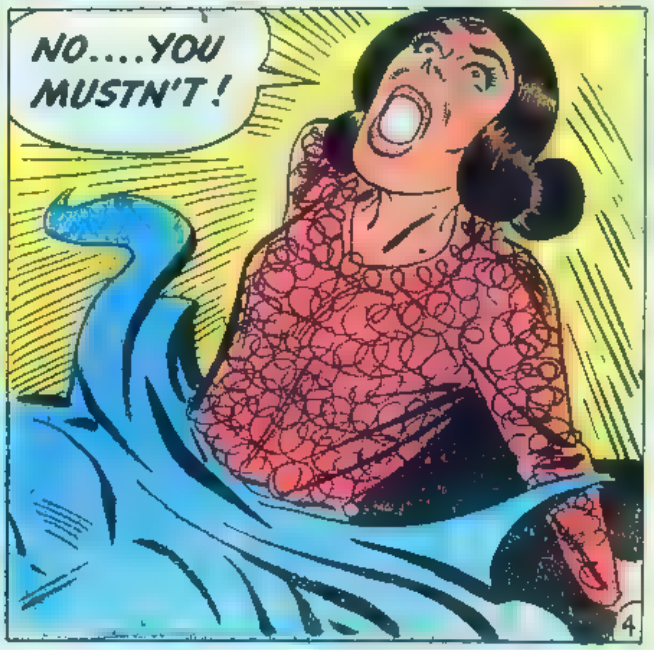


ALL OF THIS LUCILLE MICHAUD SAW IN HER DREAM! SHE WAS HELPLESS...OR WAS SHE! IN HER MIND STRANGE SHAPES SWIRLED! FIGMENTS OF HER POWERFUL IMAGINATION! NOW, SHE THOUGHT....
I MUST STOP THEM.... SOMEHOW!


WE ARE RICH, MON AMI!
HURRY BEFORE SOMEONE HEARS US!

WHO ARE Y.... I KNOW YOU, RAOUL PINTEAU....YOU ARE A WORTHLESS IDLER AND A THIEF! LES GENDARMES WILL...
HE MUST DIE, EMIL!

ONE HAD THE KNIFE! HE LEAPED AT ARMAND, THE BUTLER, INTENDING TO KILL AS THE OTHER RAISED HIS CLUB....
MAIS, NON... SPARE ME!
KILL HIM, EMIL!


NO....YOU MUSTN'T!

SUDDENLY SOMETHING GRASPED RAOUL....SOFT AND MOIST AND SLIMEY...AND INCREDIBLY POWERFUL!
EMIL SOMETHING HAS M....EEEIIIII!
MON DIEU!

PLEASE....DON'T LET IT....
YAAAGGGHH!!

GLUCH
CRACK
CRUNCH
GET OUT OF MY WAY, FOOL!

EMIL WAS ALMOST AT THE DOOR WHEN SOMETHING LIKE A HEAVY, BONELESS TENTACLE CLASPED HIS LEG AND....
GOT TO GET AWA....
YAAAGGHH!

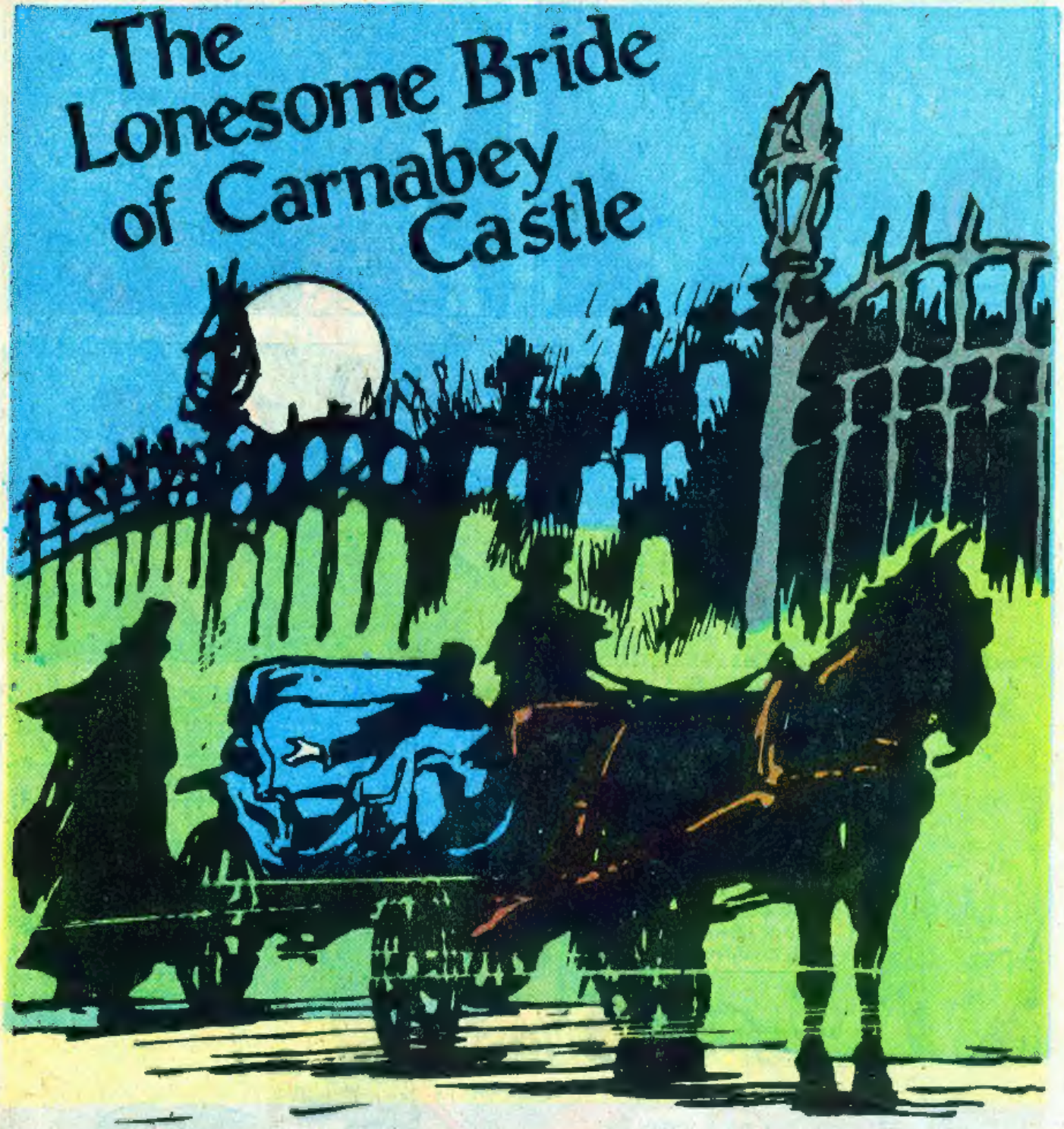
ARMAND REPORTED TO LE COMTE, HIS MASTER! THE BODIES OF EMIL AND RAOUL JUST VANISHED. NEITHER WAS EVER SEEN AGAIN.
A SHAPELESS MONSTER? HMMMM....I HAVE AN IDEA WHENCE IT CAME, ARMAND, BUT I WILL KEEP IT TO MYSELF.
IN THE MORNING, MME. MICHAUD KNEW THE WORST. SHE WOULD NEVER SEE HER FELONIOUS FRIENDS AGAIN.
YOU SLEPT WELL, LUCILLE?
I HAD A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE AUNT ANNA! I DREAMED THOSE MEN YOU KNOW WERE ROBBING LE COMTE AND THEY WERE KILLED BY SOMETHING VERY STRANGE.
SHE REMEMBERS NOTHING. SHE IS MY NIECE BUT I WOULD DO AWAY WITH HER IF SHE SUSPECTED THE TRUTH.
IT HAS BEEN A WEEK SINCE RAOUL AND EMIL DISAPPEARED. I MUST RECRUIT PAUL AND HENRI FOR FUTURE VENTURES.
YOUR NIECE CAN TELL US THE COMBINATION OF MONSIEUR LE BANQUER'S SAFE. HOW DOES SHE KNOW?
I DISCOVERED LUCILLE IS A PSYCHIC. SHE HAS A VERY POWERFUL MIND. I CAN LEARN ANYTHING FROM HER WHEN SHE IS IN A TRANCE.
6

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE.
COME TO MY HOUSE AT NINE, MONSIEURS. IT IS BEST WHEN LUCILLE'S MIND IS TIRED. SHE SLIPS EASILY INTO A HYPNOTIC STATE.
THAT EVENING, AS USUAL, LUCILLE DID HER LESSONS IN THE KITCHEN. AT NINE, THERE WAS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR AND...
COME IN, GENTLEMEN. LUCILLE, THESE ARE FRIENDS OF MINE.
THEY ARE BAD LIKE RAOUL AND EMIL! I DO NOT LIKE THEM.
AUNT ANNA, I DO NOT WISH TO PLAY THAT GAME WHILE THEY ARE HERE.
NONSENSE, CHILD! I ONLY WISH TO DEMONSTRATE HOW EASILY I CAN HYPNOTIZE YOU.
LOOK INTO THE CRYSTAL BALL, LUCILLE. YOU SEE MOVING FIGURES, DO YOU NOT? NOW I WISH TO ASK YOU QUESTIONS.
YOU KNOW MONSIEUR LE BANQUEUR? HE HAS A SERIES OF IMPORTANT NUMBERS IN HIS MIND. YOU MUST TELL US WHAT THEY ARE.
YES, AUNT ANNA.
7

LUCILLE MICHAUD HAD ALWAYS BEEN EASILY HYPNOTIZED! HER MIND WAS CAPABLE OF AMAZING FEATS. .BUT, NOW, LUCILLE REALIZED SHE WAS BEING USED FOR EVIL PURPOSES. HER AUNT ANNA HAD BECOME AN ENEMY.
NOW, LUCILLE TELL US THE NUMBERS IN THAT MAN'S MIND!
I WILL NOT, AUNT ANNA.
SACRE BLEU--LOOK AT THE SMOKE! IT LOOKS LIKE A...
IT FLOWED TOWARD MADAME MICHAUD FIRST... ONE MOMENT SHE WAS THERE, HER COMPELLING EYES DEMANDING EVIL FROM HER NIECE.. THE NEXT MOMENT SHE WAS GONE...ALL THAT REMAINED WERE THE LAST ECHOES OF HER SHRILL SCREAM!
SHOOT THE GIRL.... SHE'S CAUSING IT!
BAM BAM BAM
AUNT ANNA IS GONE...THE MEN ARE GONE...I WILL NEVER LET ANYONE USE ME LIKE THAT AGAIN!
YOU LIKE THE STORY? I HATED IT. THE CREATURE CREATED IN THE MIND OF LUCILLE MICHAUD CONSUMED ITS VICTIMS. THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO BURY AND THAT IS VERY BAD FOR BUSINESS.
End

The Lonesome Bride of Carnabey Castle



Eerie, spine-chilling sounds echoed out of the deserted halls of Carnabey Castle, the old, haunted manor.

"My god! The noise of the night breeze blowing through the old place actually sounds like a woman crying," remarked Henry Carlisle.

Henry's friends, Walter and Victor, were natives of the small, European village of Carnabey. They glanced at each other uneasily. Henry's observation was more acute than he could imagine.

Henry paused at the rusting, crumbling gates that encircled the castle. The full moon seemed to balance precariously on the tip of one of the castle's towers. It was an ominous and foreboding sight to behold.

"Why don't the townspeople renovate the castle? It would make a lovely, tourist attraction. It's a shame to see such a remarkable piece of architecture crumbling to dust," said Henry, as his eyes scanned the castle and its surroundings.

"You are only a medical student on vacation here," remarked Victor. "You are not acquainted with the local superstitions. No one who lives here would dare set foot inside the castle. Even Walter and I will have no part of that evil place."

"Are you suggesting that the castle is haunted?" scoffed Henry.

"We do not suggest it!" snapped Walter. "It is so and we accept it as does everyone else around here. Those soul-wretching sounds you heard were not the wind. It was the bride of Carnabey Castle, a ghost cry-

ing and sobbing over the miserable fate the gods have bestowed on her!"

"Come!" said Henry. "Let's get to the tavern so you can fill my head with more stories of horror, while I drown my own miseries in a tankard of ale."

The three University students strolled into the small village. They marched directly to the tavern and seated themselves at a corner table. They called for tankards of ale.

"Now, tell me more about this ghost," commanded Henry.

"She was the last of the Carnabey line. She was to e married to a handsome devil, who cheated her out of her money. He left her waiting at the altar in her bridal gown," explained Victor.

"It was quite a scandel," began Walter. "The girl was disgraced and heartbroken. She returned to the castle and threw herself off of the upper-most balcony. She fell to her death on the night of her wedding."

"She walks the halls of the castle in her wedding gown," said Victor. "She is looking for a lover to keep her company throughout eternity. Any man who enters the castle is a likely candidate for her ghostly affection."

"Ha, I would chance death just to meet an unmarried, beautiful girl," retorted Henry.

"You are a fool or a braggert, young man," said the innkeeper, who had brought the ale. "You do not have the courage to enter the castle," he added.

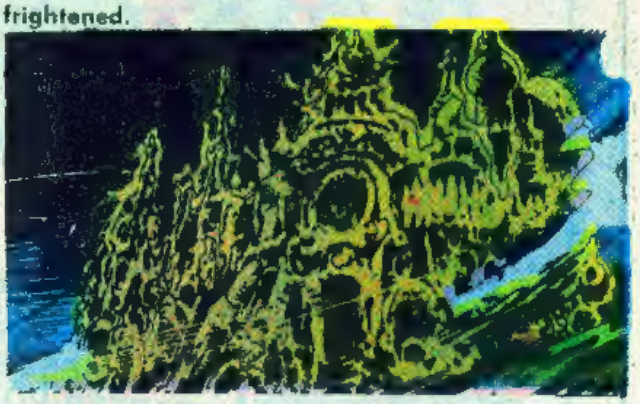
"I'll wager you the price of a full night's drinking for three, thirsty men that I will enter the castle," snapped Henry.

"It's a wager," agreed the innkeeper.

Walter and Victor tried to dissuade Henry, but it was to no avail. He didn't believe in ghosts. He instructed his friends to wait at the tavern for him. In two hours, they were to come looking for him. He bade them farewell, laughed and headed towards the castle.

Henry bravely proceeded to the castle gates. He heard sobbing, whining sounds coming from the castle. He assured himself that it was only the wind.

He walked to the front door. He put his shoulder to the old door and forced it open. The inside of the entrance hall was thick with dust and cobwebs. Inhaling the musky air made him nauseous, but he wasn't frightened.



"I'll go to the upper floor and wave to them from the balcony when they come to search for me," thought Henry.

He began to quickly climb the stairs and soon reached the upper-most hallway. The eerie sounds became louder and louder. When he neared the open, glass doors that led to the balcony, he saw her ghostly image.

She was in her bridal gown and the loveliest creature he'd ever beheld — living or dead. He was absolutely hypnotized by her beauty. She stopped crying when she saw him. She smiled and motioned for him to approach her. He was helpless to resist. He was blinded by her charms. He stepped out onto the balcony. He reach out to grab her. He lost his balance and hurled headfirst over the railing into the darkness below.

Two hours later, Victor and Walter came to look for their friend. They found his crumpled, broken, dead body on the ground below the balcony. They gazed up at the ominous tower and saw his spectre-like form standing on the balcony. In his arms was the ghostly bride of Carnabey Castle. She wasn't loneseme any longer.